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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR DECRIES HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN  
SOUTH OSSETIA

1. (SBU) Summary: In an August 11 letter to the NATO Deputy Secretary General (see para 2 for full text), Russian Ambassador to NATO Dmitri Rogozin accused the Georgian army of creating an ongoing humanitarian disaster in South Ossetia. Specifically, he asserted that the Georgian army killed 2.5 thousand civilians in a spree of carpet bombing, ethnic cleansing, and mass shootings, and this has caused 35,000 South Ossetians to take refuge in North Ossetia. He said 17 Russian peacekeepers have been killed, 14 reported missing, and 150 with severe or moderate wounds; and he accused Georgian forces of destroying the water supply in Tskhinvali and holding Russian citizens under house arrest. In addition, he then outlined Russian humanitarian assistance, including the establishment of an EMERCOM mobile hospital. Conspicuously absent is any mention of or justification for Russian aggression. End summary.

2. (SBU) Begin Text

Dear Ambassador,

I would like to inform you about the scale of the ongoing humanitarian disaster in South Ossetia as a result of the actions of Georgian armed forces. In our opinion the statistics given below is not appropriately reflected in world mass media or only biased opinion is presented. Since the start of hostilities on the night of 7/8 August more than 2.5 thousand of civilians have been killed. Such a significant number of casualties could be explained by "carpet bombing" of the city asleep, ethnic cleansing and mass shooting of civilians in South Ossetian villages captured by Georgian army. The number of refugees who have reached safe haven in North Ossetia is close to 35 thousand. 10 to 17 thousand people fled from Tskhinvali and now are seeking shelter in villages controlled by South Ossetian authorities. Between 9 and 15 thousand people remain under debris of practically destroyed capital of South Ossetia and suffer desperate conditions. Many of them require immediate medical assistance.

The number of casualties of Russian peacekeepers has reached 17, 14 are reported missing and more than 150 got severe or moderate wounds. Medical assistance for them is provided in field or stationary hospitals. This data is approximate since the hostilities are underway. However it is obvious that if the hostilities are not ceased, the above-mentioned appalling figures may definitely grow.

We have found out that the Georgian authorities are holding Russian citizens who happened to be on either personal or business matters in Georgia during these days under house

arrest.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Georgian side intentionally prevents search, rescue and evacuation actions on territories captured by Georgian forces, though inter alia, shelling the convoys of refugees and wounded. Many of them are civilians, mostly women and children. Due to the actions of the Georgian side people are bleeding to death as the necessary help could not have been delivered.

Immediately after the start of the hostilities has become a fact the Russian government took urgent measures to help the victims. A camp capable of housing no less than 2.5 thousand refugees has been deployed in the immediate vicinity of the border between North and South Ossetia. The Russian EMERCOM mobile hospital has been running for two days, and the Russian Ministry of Health's hospital has also been deployed on South Ossetian border. Today in Tskhinval an EMERCOM squad of 273 people, 50 of them are doctors, is conducting its mission. An EMERCOM hospital is expected to be fully deployed by today's evening in the north of Tskhinval. More than 340 tonnes of medical supplies and food stuff have been sent to the region and are already being distributed. More than 200 million dollars have been allocated by the Russian government with the aim to prevent the escalation of humanitarian disaster and to conduct urgent reconstruction works.

Unfortunately we are not aware of any actions taken by the Georgian side to prevent the aggravation of this unheard-of

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human disaster. On the contrary, we are receiving information that in addition to the vital infrastructure of Tskhinval already destroyed by the Georgian artillery, the single left bakery has also been recently destroyed. This has aggravated the humanitarian disaster even more. Statistics is a very catchy thing. Even the loss of a single human life is a tragedy. May be in absolute figures the number of casualties is not as high as, for example, the number of casualties in the recent natural disasters in Myanmar and China. But if you recall that the population of South Ossetia was 120 thousand people, 43 thousand of them living in the capital, you can see the real scale of the catastrophe. Actually the whole population of the Republic of Ossetia can be considered the victim of the Saakashvili regime only because most of them were born Ossetians. Even judging by preliminary data one can call it a pre-planned genocide, unprecedented since the World War II. The most gruesome thing is that this tragedy was not caused by natural disaster, but due to carefully planned and ill-intended actions of the present Georgian authorities and their tutors.

In the last hours we have received information that the Georgian armed forces have deliberately destroyed the water-supply station in Tskhinval. This has led to the flooding of apartment basements in the nearby area and presumably caused death of civilians that were hiding there. If this information is confirmed, this would be another proof of inhumane actions of the Georgian armed forces against civilian population.

Dear Ambassador,

You are kindly requested to circulate this letter among the delegations of NATO member countries so that they could to take into consideration reliable data when making conclusions about the situation in South Ossetia. We hope that our assessments would concur because, finally, one should call a spade a spade.

Sincerely yours,

ID. Rogozin  
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to NATO

End text.  
VOLKER